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CHAPTER IV

INITIATION RITES

●881 INITIATION rites might well be discussed under the heading of education, but as they form such a complete unit by themselves, they are described separately. An elaborate ritual marks the significant change in the boy's life upon his entrance into adult society. The initiation takes place when the boy is circumcised, but the operation is only one aspect of the ritual. It is the boy's break from home, his entrance into adult male society, which is important for him, for his immediate family, and for the rest of the community.

The initiation rites really consist of two rituals: one accompanies the circumcision and seclusion of the boys, and the other is part of the display of *malanggans*, which always occurs at this time. *Malanggans* are the elaborate carvings connected with mortuary rites, and are the most important ritual objects in the society. While *malanggan* rites may be held separately and unconnected with any other ritual, they always form part of the initiation ceremonies, and it is not possible to separate the two in a description.

NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR HOLDING RITES

The initiation rites performed during my visit covered a period of eight months, which is exclusive of the preliminary events such as the making of magic over the gardens. The actual time to hold the rites is unrelated to any particular time or season, but is determined by such factors as the presence in the village of a number of boys of suitable age to be circumcised, the condition of the gardens, and whether those responsible for the rites have sufficient wealth.

The rites I observed were concerned with the circumcision

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of eight boys, ranging in age approximately between nine and eleven. Six of the boys were of the Hawk moiety and two of the Eagle. They all came from that section of Lesu known as Tagam, formerly another village separate from Lesu.[1]

PREPARATIONS

The initial preparations are begun about ten months in advance, when the garden magician makes taro magic, and the rain magician rain magic, in order to ensure a good crop. At this same time arrangements are made for the purchase of the pigs for the future feast. The men who will display *malanggans* are also busy superintending their carving. These and the dancing-masks are begun four or five months before the rites are held,[2] and the work is done in a secluded place, away from all observation.

The first communal work occurs about a month before the boys are circumcised, and consists of the building of the enclosure in which they will later be secluded. All the men and boys of Lesu and some from the neighbouring villages of Ambwa and Lagania assist in this work. The men from Ambwa reach the hamlet of Penguli (in Lesu) early in the morning, where they are joined by the Lesu men. They are all in a gay mood. With the *kerapo* leaves[3] stuck in their hair and in their belts, about fifty of them go to a clearing a short distance from the hamlet of Penguli. Here they cut down the bamboo trees and then crack the trunks at the circular rings with their knives,[4] working with enthusiasm and zest. Then, placing the bamboo trunks on their shoulders, they walk down to the beach and along it

[1] See Chapter I, p. 32.
[2] Making of the *malanggans* described, pp. 211, 212.
[3] The *kerapo* leaf is used decoratively on all ritual occasions.
[4] Knives have been recently introduced. Men who have been away to work on plantations have them, and they were the most popular gift which I could make.

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881 singing, until they come to the hamlet of Ponatlege, where the enclosure is to be built. Ridis, an old man, leads in the singing. When they arrive at Ponatlege the women and girls (about 150 of them) are already sitting on the ground in the open compound preparing the taro to be baked. The men and boys pass by them and proceed to the beach, where they put down their bamboo poles and lay them lengthwise. Ongas, the chief of Lesu, and known for his building skill, is in command of the work. Poles are stuck [417] in the ground as a support for the split bamboo logs, which are laid on top of each other, thus making a fence about 30 feet high for the large enclosure, which is approximately 45 by 100 feet. There is no roof. As they labour the men sing. Young boys watch the work with interest. The name for this enclosure is *nogu*, which is the name for any fence made of split wood.

While the enclosure is constructed the women scrape the taro, laying them on the banana leaves, sprinkle the shredded coconut over it, and bind it all up into a bundle. Some of the men not occupied in building the enclosure make the *liga*, the piles of hot stones. In a few hours' time the taro is all wrapped in bundles and put in the *liga*, which is then completely covered with leaves and sand; the main part of the latter work is done by the men, but the women assist. The men have also prepared a pig, which is being baked in a separate *liga*.

The enclosure has been finished. The men and women sit in the compound or at ease on the beach, chatting. The men are in groups apart from the women. Soon the *kolamuth* [534] (a hollowed tree-trunk used as a drum) is sounded inside the enclosure, and the men wend their way there. Some of [482] them carry on their shoulder poles to which coconuts are tied. The food is removed from the *liga* and other men carry part of it into the enclosure. The women pile the remainder in their baskets. It is early afternoon now and the men eat in

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the enclosure, while the women trudge home with baskets filled with bundles of baked taro on their backs. Shortly afterward the men too return home, each one carrying on a pole over his shoulder the coconuts which had been given him. The enclosure has been completed; the men who built it have been paid with food; now, in another moon, the first rites will be held.

WOMEN'S DANCES

A few nights later all the women of Lesu begin their dance rehearsals. They practise separately from the women of Tagam. At the first rehearsal they sit in a circle around the fire on the ground in front of Ballock's house. He is the teacher, and sits with his back to them and sings. Gradually they join in the singing. After a while he blows on his conch shell and the women stand up and, still singing, move in circular formation to the left, bending the right knee with each step. Ballock continues sitting with his back to them. At intervals they stop singing, always on a high note, then begin again. After some time they sit down and sing as they did in the beginning. Then they begin to dance again. This continues for about three hours before the women go home. The song accompanying the dance is known to the women, but the dance is new.

The rehearsals are held nightly, and become more complicated with each repetition, the dance going into various figures, line, square, and circle formations. After the first week or so the rehearsals are not held in front of Ballock's house, but in an open clearing in the hamlet of Penguli. Here every night, after the evening meal is finished (about 8.30), the women gather and dance. The men are not present. On a few nights, after some particularly strenuous day, when the women are tired, the rehearsals are omitted. The men, too, have begun their dance rehearsals at

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881 another place, and at one feast Ballock urges them to dance
535 well, otherwise he says the women will not like them.

881 Like the dancing, the accompanying music is traditional,
535 but frequently there are variations in the former. Ballock
177 has evidently, as far as I can ascertain, made up the variations on the particular dance he is teaching the women. Sometimes if a boy from another island is in the village, he will teach the natives a dance from his island. One of my servants, though a native of New Ireland, had worked for a long time in the white man's capital, Rabaul, in New Britain, and she taught the Lesu women a dance she had learned there.[1] Frequently boys from different islands, working on one plantation, teach each other their dances. Out of the growing contact between the natives from various islands, it appears that the dance is the cultural trait which is the most easily and frequently diffused.

881 In the meantime the growth of the new moon is watched with interest, for when it is full that will be the time for the rites.

The last two nights preceding the rites the rehearsing is very much in earnest. Just before this they had slackened a bit. At the end of the next to last one, which is held earlier
[437] than the others at dusk, each woman pays Ballock one stick of tobacco for his instruction. Most of them go to bed early, for the morrow will be a strenuous day.

Early in the morning the women, carrying the taro on their backs, start off for the hamlet of Ponatlege. Arriving there are also women from Ambwa, Langania, and the other hamlets of Lesu. About seventy-five or a hundred women are present. Immediately they begin the usual cooking preparations. Most of the men from Tagam are busy bringing in leaves and building the *liga*, but a few old ones sit on the ground doing nothing. At intervals the *kolamuth* is

[1] The Lesu women asked me if I would teach them a dance from my country. I refrained.

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sounded from within the enclosure. While the women sit and chat after the taro is in the *liga*, Macrabit, as usual, plays the part of the clown. She causes much merriment by taking a fishing-net and walking about with it as if she were a man. Two other old women play a form of hide-and-seek, hiding behind the trees and walking about in a creeping fashion. So also do they sit playfully on the legs and backs of other women. This occurs between women of different moieties, and resembles on a small scale the playful fighting of the pregnancy rites. I was told that it is now done because the boys were to be circumcised soon.

When the food is removed from the *liga*, most of it is left at Ponatlege, although the men eat a small part of it in the compound in front of the men's house, and some small bundles are taken home by the women. As they walk home, single file along the narrow footpath, baskets on their backs, some of them do their dancing step. There is a general air of jollification.

Late that afternoon much excitement and a real "before the ball" atmosphere prevails. The women arrange the yellow *puhpuh* flower in their hair, put on their best loin-cloths and their *kepkeps* (breast ornaments) and *biuks* (arm-bands).[1] At sunset there is a final short dance rehearsal under Ballock's direction. When this is over all the women, much excited and carrying bundles of the yellow *puhpuh* as well as having stuck it behind the ear, start off for Ponatlege. The men set out a bit later. As the women enter the hamlet, an old man gives each one some white lime which she puts on her face.

Women and men from Langania and Ambwa are also present. The latter sit in small groups in front of the men's house and out in the compound. The women begin dancing almost immediately, and the men, much interested, watch

[1] There was also a demand for red crêpe paper and tinsel trimming from me, both of which were twisted around the hair.

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881 them. Young men hold burning torches near the dancers so that all can see them. First the women from Ambwa dance, then the women from Lesu, as separate from Tagam; and because these women are more gaily decorated (with the tinsel trimming I have given them) than the others, their dance is considered a great "hit," and they themselves think that they are the best. Then the women from Langania dance, followed by dancing of all the women present, including those of Tagam. This continues all night, groups of women alternating in their dancing. About midnight some of the women and men go home, but those from Tagam and Langania and many of the others remain and dance all night.

When the sky is lighting up and the sun just appearing on the edge of the sea, the eight boys walk in a circle, each with his father, who holds his hand or places it affectionately on his shoulder. One boy walks between his father and mother, who is crying. The boys and men sing as they continue walking in circular formation for perhaps half an hour before they go inside the enclosure. Then the mothers of the boys cry—literally weep, as distinguished from the ritual wailing—and almost immediately they begin to dance, circle formation, singing the accompaniment at the same time. Inside the *kolamuth* is being sounded. After a very short interval (about ten minutes) some of the men run out from the enclosure and instantly there is a spirited fight on between these men and the women (particularly the mothers of the boys). The men vigorously hurl stones at the women, who in turn excitedly throw stones, coconut shells, or anything they can lay their hands on, at the men. At the same time jeering talk is exchanged between them. The air is filled with flying missiles, and some of the women run to near-by houses for shelter. The fight stops as suddenly as it began, the men returning to the enclosure and the women continuing their circular dance. After a short time

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they pause and rest. The women tell me they weep because they fear the pain being inflicted upon their sons, who are themselves afraid. The women, other than the mothers, say that they are sorry for the mothers whose boys are now being circumcised, and that they dance in sympathy with them.

CIRCUMCISION

In the meantime the boys are being circumcised.[1] One hears no sound from the enclosure, and I was told that a piece of wood is put in the boy's mouth to prevent him from crying out. A father will hold his son steady while another man does the cutting, which is now done with a knife, but in the past with a stone instrument.

By the middle of the morning the men and women of Tagam are busy arranging the food in piles. All the women who danced during the night now return to Ponatlege with empty baskets. They stop and sit down just before they enter. This halt just before entering a place happens very frequently and appears to be an act of courtesy; the guests do not want to arrive before the hosts are ready. When the Tagam people have completed the arrangements of the food, the women enter Ponatlege, where the distribution is to take place.

SPEECHES OF WOMEN

Taro and coconuts are arranged in two piles on the ground. A group of Eagle women—all of them wives of the

[1] While I observed all the rites, I did not go into the enclosure to see the boys being circumcised, nor did I go inside the enclosure at any time while the boys were confined there, although it would have been possible for me to have done so. As the preceding description indicated, there was a decided grouping according to sex and a strained, hostile feeling between the men and the women. As I had been identified rather closely with the women, even to the extent of participating in one of the dances, I thought it would be unwise to swerve suddenly to the masculine group.

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men who are maternal uncles of the boys being circumcised —rush on the scene, carrying knives, fishing-nets, and other implements, and circle around one pile of food, which will later be given to the Eagle boys in the enclosure. Each in turn holds up the implement she carries and makes a speech.

One, holding up a hatchet: "With this hatchet my husband knows how to work in the garden. My garden has no trees or bushes in it, and I plant the taro. My husband plants the bananas. I cut them down with this hatchet. Now my husband's *tsringi* (her husband's sister's son) goes into the enclosure. I talk true to all you women and to all you men."

Another holds up a plate.[1] "You see this plate. My man goes fishing in the sea and catches many fish. Now I cook the fish in the saucepan, and then I drink it from the plate. Now I talk to all you women and all you men. By and by you will say, 'Ah, she is ashamed.'[2] I do not like to talk any more. My talk is finished."

Another holds up a basket used for catching fish. "My husband takes the basket and goes into the sea. He catches many fish. He brings them home. I eat plenty of fish. I eat bananas, but not so many of them. Now my husband's little *tsringi* has gone into the enclosure. I do not hide anything from all of you. I talk true. I do not like to make a long speech. I have finished."

One, holding up a knife, says: "This knife belongs to the work in the garden. My husband takes the knife and cuts firewood with it. Now I, I am a woman, and am not strong enough to get firewood. I like to

[1] A few enamelled plates have been introduced by boys who have been away working on plantations. This woman is describing the making of soup, which has also been introduced with saucepans.

[2] The shame is for not talking truly.

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take it easy and not get the firewood. Now I talk true to all you women and to all you men. I talk because my husband's *tsringi* has gone into the enclosure. My speech is finished."

Another, holding up the blackened bones of a fish, states: "I am a woman and I like to eat fish. Suppose my husband likes to sleep, I say to him, 'You go out to the sea and catch some fish for me.' Suppose he is lazy. I talk strong, 'Ah, go catch fish in the big sea.' Suppose he is afraid because it is dar' I talk stronger, 'You go, catch fish!' Now he goes. To day my husband's *tsringi* has gone into the enclosure. I have talked true."

These women now withdraw. Up dance a group of Hawk women, who stand around the other pile of food, which will later be given to the Hawk boys who are within the enclosure. They in turn also hold up implements and make speeches.

Says one, holding up a spear: "My husband, he takes this spear and then with his dog goes into the bush. He catches a pig with the spear. Then all the men cook the pig. My husband brings part of the pig to me and I eat it. Now all you women, all you men, look at this spear. It is to catch pigs. I talk true. My husband's *tsringi* has gone into the enclosure."

Holding up a basket, another says: "I want all you women and all you men to look at this basket. My husband, he eats at the feast in the cemetery. Then he puts taro in the basket and comes home with it and I eat. Suppose he takes a walk, he is given taro and puts it in the basket, and when he comes home we both eat. Now I want to talk true. My husband's *tsringi* has gone into the enclosure. I want to talk true. Now I have finished."

Another says, holding up a knife: "Look at this knife. I am a woman. My husband is lazy. He does not know

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how to work. He is a man who does nothing. I do not know how to make speeches. That's all. My husband's *tsringi* has gone into the enclosure. I want to talk true. My husband, he strolls about; he does not work."

Laughter follows this speech, and I am told that the lazy husband has been shamed.

One, holding a banana stalk, says: "All of you look at this which holds bananas. My husband knows much about planting bananas. He plants them; later he picks and brings them into the house. Then when they are ripe I eat them. Now my husband's *tsringi* has gone into the enclosure. Now I have talked true."

Says one, holding up a piece of rope: "My husband used to catch fish and put them along this rope. But to-day he is old, and he no longer catches fish. So I, a woman, no longer eat fish now. I have finished talking. My husband's *tsringi* has gone into the enclosure. Now I talk true."

A few other speeches of a similar nature follow.

DISTRIBUTION OF CURRENCY AND FOOD

When the women have finished speaking and retired into the crowd, an old man, Lungow, of the Eagle moiety, stands up and holds out a branch of betel-nuts from which hang eight pieces of *tsera* (currency). This *tsera* was contributed by the mothers of the Eagle boys who are in the enclosure. First the old man sings[1] over it and then addresses the crowd. "Look at this *tsera*. This place (Ponatlege) has few men, and this *tsera* is enough for three men (only three men live in Ponatlege). Now all of you look at the betel-nut and the *tsera*. It is only a little for three men. All you men and

[1] This is a kind of ditty refrain occurring in the Tsenabonpil myth. I am unable to translate the song, the words of which are in an obsolete language.

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all you women have come up to Ponatlege; it is a new feast, the first one to be made at Ponatlege. To-day we make a feast. All of you look at the *tsera* and the betel-nut. Enough! One Hawk man, you take the *tsera*."

Buibui, a member of the Hawk moiety, walks up to Lungow and takes the *tsera* and betel-nut from him. It is distributed among the clan relatives of the Hawk boys being initiated—maternal uncle, maternal grandfather, mother, maternal nephew and niece. The father receives none.

Now up steps Sola, an important old man of the Hawk moiety. He also holds a stalk of betel-nuts with eight pieces of *tsera* hanging from it. He speaks: "You men and you women, all of us come to-day to Ponatlege where all the little boys are going into the enclosure. Now all of you look at this *tsera* and betel-nut, which I pay back to the Eagle people. I do not like to make a long speech. I have talked enough." Sola then hands over the *tsera* and betel-nuts to a man of the Eagle moiety, who gives it to the clan relatives of the Eagle boys who are in the enclosure.

Lungam then stands by a pile of taro and talks again.[1] "All you women of Ponatlege, Ponambwa, Simbelmalum, Ponemebatawa (all hamlets of Tagam) distribute the taro to all the women. Do not forget one woman nor one child. There is enough food for all. Last night all of them came and danced, and so you now give them food in return. When you have finished, we men will eat in the enclosure."

Now comes the distribution of the food by the people of Ponatlege, the parents of the newly initiated boys being particularly active. It is uncooked food, yams, taro, and coconuts, contributed by the women of Tagam—mostly by the mothers of the boys being circumcised—and is given

[1] Lungam and Sola are the speakers because they are important old men of their clans in Tagam and because they are good talkers. Oratorical ability, or lack of it, is readily recognized.

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881 to the other women in payment for their dancing the previous night. They pile it in their baskets and trudge home heavily laden. These women had brought taro the day before and baked it, and this remains at Ponatlege. The men go into the enclosure and eat pig and taro.[1]

The boys now remain in the enclosure for a few weeks. In the past they remained longer, but now after a few weeks they are sent to the Catholic Mission for instruction.[2] While they are in the enclosure the older men talk to them about fishing, hunting wild pig, etc.[3] No women are allowed in the enclosure, and they do not see the boys until they later ritually return to the society.

FOLK-TALES CONCERNING INITIATION

881 538 The attitude and part played by the women when the boys go in to be circumcised is brought out rather clearly in folk-tales which deal with this subject. One is a tale of a mother who tried to keep her boy from being circumcised. The boys of the village were to be circumcised, and it was preceded by the usual ritual dancing of the women. Then, when the boys entered the enclosure the women cried and there was a fight between them and the men, as in the scene at Ponatlege just described. The mother of one of the boys ran away because she was afraid, then came back and tried to get her boy. The men prevented this and took the boy away. But she pursued the man who was carrying off her boy. The men turned and saw her, and then they killed

[1] The day after the feast I inquired about the food supply at Ponatlege. Although they had given away much food there was still plenty remaining for ordinary meals. They do not have these rites unless they have a large supply of food.

[2] The Catholic Mission has very cleverly availed itself of this period for instruction.

[3] My information on the instruction given is not very complete. As already stated, I did not go into the place where the boys were secluded, and during this initiation period was mostly with the women.

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both her and the boy and ate them. In the meantime the woman's clan relatives waited for her to come home. When she did not return and they learned what had happened, they killed a pig and made a big mortuary feast.

Another is a tale of a woman who wanted to look at a boy while he was in the enclosure. This young boy was in the enclosure during the period of seclusion which follows the circumcision. The wife of his maternal uncle came back from the garden with taro, which she put in the house and then purposely made the fire die. She wanted to look at the boy, and so she called out to him that her fire was dead and that he should bring her some fire (a smouldering log). The boy did this, and then returned to the enclosure. A little while later the woman put out her fire again, and called to the boy to bring out some fire. He did so and again returned to the enclosure. A third time the woman called out for some fire, and now the boy was very cross and cried out: "You call for fire all the time. I gave you fire before. Why do you make it die?" He was very angry, and putting his *biuk* on his arm, his *kepkep* on his breast, and some birds' feathers in his hair, he beat the *kolamuth* (hollowed tree-trunk used as a drum) and then put fire inside of it. He stood beside the burning *kolamuth* and sang a ditty for his *Tata* (maternal uncle) to come. The fire reached up and burned his legs as far as his knees. The boy sang his ditty again. The fire reached up higher. Now it was up to his waist. He kept on singing. Now the fire reached his breast. He continued singing. His *Tata* in the bush heard the boy crying out and asked himself, "Why is the boy calling? Someone must have made him cross." The boy cried out again, and the fire was now up to his neck. His *Tata* began running through the bush. By this time the fire was up to the boy's eyes. He still sang. The *Tata* rushed up and went immediately into the enclosure, but the boy had been completely burned up. The *Tata* asked his wife what it was all about,

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881 538 and she said that she just wanted some fire. But he saw into the real reason, which was that the woman liked the boy. He killed her, and then her clan relatives held fast a pig and made a big mortuary feast.[1]

There is another tale of boys being decoyed from their enclosure. Two boys left the enclosure where they were secluded to get some water. On the beach they saw a *kuwiwi* bird, which they tried to catch. The bird eluded them, running along the beach from hamlet to hamlet. The boys followed, always trying to catch the bird but not succeeding. Finally they came to a place where two women, who sent the bird as a decoy, awaited them. The women embraced them and had intercourse with them.[2]

The boys fought and broke away from the women finally and ran back to the enclosure. There they set fire to the *kolamuth*, stepped into the flames, and burned themselves to death. They sang as the flames crept higher and higher. The people in the bush garden heard the singing and came back to the village. They wanted to pull the boys out of the fire, but it was too late. They had been burned to death. The pigs were killed and a big feast made.

These tales reinforce what the rites indicate, namely, the jealous attitude of the women on the seclusion of the boys and the fact that there is a real cleavage between the mothers and the boys at this time. They also indicate a sexual desire of some of the women for the young boys.

MALANGGAN RITES

881 778 After these initial rites concerned with the boys entering the enclosure for circumcision, the *malanggans* begin to come

[1] This motif of crying out as the flames creep higher and higher, and the return of the people from the bush just too late, is a very common one through many tales.

[2] The folk-tale is not exactly clear as to whether the women just attempted to have coitus, or whether they succeeded.

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to the foreground. Several *malanggans* are being made; they have the names of Walik, Kolebmur, Muhdae, Lysisi.[1]

Three days after the boys are secluded the men build a small house of leaves within the enclosure, which will later hold the *malanggans*. They work all the morning building the little house, and in the afternoon eat inside the enclosure. Takou has contributed the pig for the feast. Lungow, an important old man of Takou's clan, and a classificatory brother makes a short speech over the pig before it is cut up, to the effect that this pig is to celebrate the completion of the house which will hold the *malanggans* and to pay the men who have built it. Then the pig and taro are distributed, after which Takou makes a speech. He is not a good orator, and he speaks haltingly, "I want to make the rites for the *malanggan*. By and by the women will dance and the men will dance for the *malanggan*. I want to make a big feast for them." Everyone now eats, and some of the pig and taro are taken to the inner enclosure, where the boys are secluded. Part of the taro, but none of the pig, is taken to the women outside.

From now on, every afternoon just before sunset, the men rehearse their dances. The women, who are no longer rehearsing, do not go anywhere near the place where the men practise during the three weeks which elapse before it is time for the boys to come out from the enclosure. In talking about it the natives remark that now is the time when the women will look at the boys. The day before there are the usual communal cooking preparations at Ponatlege. All the women of the village are there, scraping the taro, and the men are busy preparing the pigs, building the *liga*, etc.

[1] Each *malanggan* has a name. Mekeo, father of one of the boys being circumcised, makes the Walik one. Mekeo's son, Liputai, is also making one paid for by *tsera* given him by his father. Lusera, father of two of the boys, is making another. A maternal uncle of one of the boys makes another.

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Early in the morning, on the day of the rites, the *kolamuth* is sounded at Ponatlege. The men go into the enclosure and look at the unpainted *malanggans* which have been placed in the little grass house. In about fifteen minutes they emerge into the open compound. This is just the preliminary appearance of the *malanggan*, because the boys are coming out of the enclosure to-day.[1]

In the open compound the men and women sit in their separate groups, chatting. There is a general air of expectancy. Soon singing is heard in the distance. It comes closer. The women get up and go inside the open cook-house, and most of the men go inside the enclosure, although a few remain outside in the compound. The eight boys, accompanied by twenty men (from Tagam), advance into the compound in block formation of five lines, singing. This is called the *Bumän* dance. The hair of the boys is painted red, and each one carries a bundle of baked taro and a piece of pig's entrails wrapped in leaves. They halt and stop singing. Takou, the father of two of the boys and the maker of one of the *malaggans* to be displayed, then steps out and speaks. "All of you have come because of these boys. Now this *Bumän* rite is done in Ponatlege. My mother knew this *Bumän* in Penguli where she lived. To-day the *Bumän* is done in Ponatlege. Suppose my mother had not known the *Bumän*, then I, Takou, could not know it. I talk to all you men and to all you women. I have talked enough. Suppose you have a big man; he will talk much more to you. But I am a little boy.[2] All of you, all the men, all the women, all the Luluai (chiefs), all of us have come here for this little *malanggan*. That's all. Suppose it is big *malanggan* rite, then there would be a big speech. But Ponatlege is a new place,

[1] When they come out they will go to the Mission school. In the past they would have stayed within the enclosure until the finished *malanggans* were displayed. Now when they come out the unpainted *malanggans* are shown.

[2] The speaker is a large, adult man, but the custom is to belittle oneself.

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and Mekeo and I are making these rites for the first time. All of you from Langania, all of you from Lesu, all of you from Ambwa, and two men from Laummasong have come. All of us have come at one time. There are many men here. When the *malanggan* is finished all of you will go back. We do not have many men at Ponatlege, three men and three women, that is all. I want to finish my speech. I do not like to make long speeches. I have finished." Now eight women who stand in the relation of father's sister to the boys (*Tomangaina*) walk up to them. The boys give them the taro and the pig's entrails, and each woman gives her *Tomangaina* a little tobacco and a half *tsera*. The mothers of the boys gave them the taro and pig's entrails which they have just handed to their *Tomangaina*. The latter now step back into the crowd.[1] The boys and men then dance, in silence. They turn, kneel slightly, turn about again, and this turn and kneeling motion is repeated six or seven times. Each man carries a stalk of the long grass, *Lil*, in his hand, and on their last turn he hurls his *Lil* in front of him as if it were a spear. This *Lil*[2] is supposed to be dangerous, and that is the reason most of the men and women ran for shelter when the dance was begun, and why those who did remain outside were careful to be out of reach of the shafts of this grass. It *is believed that if it* touches the skin sores will appear.

Sola, an important old man of the Sinimanbul clan, and the one owning the *Walik malanggan* now on display, stands up and talks. "Before, when I was a little boy, I lived in Tabar. I saw this *malanggan* there. Later I came to Lesu, but before I left Tabar I paid *tsera* to

[1] It is of interest to note that this is the first time in the rites that relatives on the paternal side have taken an active part, and that these women are of the same moiety as the future mates of the boys.

[2] The *Lil* is a species of *Graminae imperata*.

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my clan relatives to learn about this *malanggan*. Now I live in the hamlet of Simbelmalum. Now I have made[1] the *malanggan* and have brought it to Ponatlege. It is not good that later you will say, Sola he lied. No, it is true, I learned about this *malanggan* from my clan relatives. Mekeo wants this *malanggan*, and so I have given it to him. All of you men from Lesu, Ambwa, and Langania have another kind of *malanggan*. Mine is different from yours. That "bed" on which the two pigs are resting is the custom in Tabar. It is different from the kind of "bed" you make here. I cannot make a long speech. I am an old man. I have finished talking."

Now the men and the boys go inside the enclosure, where they sit on the ground around the walls facing the unpainted *malanggans*. The two roasted pigs are in front of it. Two men[2] stand up behind the *malanggan*, so that they are only visible from the waist up. One has a bird's beak in his mouth and a brightly coloured bird's tail in his hair. The other has a crown of feathers and also a beak in his mouth. Both men are wearing their *kepkep* (breast ornament). Their hands are clasped in back. They sway from right to left rhythmically. The men and boys who were doing the *Bumän* dance outside now continue with the same dance, and are led by the two swaying men. The boys drop out of the dance and sit down by the walls on each side of the enclosure. The men continue dancing and begin to sing also. The dance stops and they all sit down. Then Lungow (a member of the same moiety, but not of the same clan), who has been beating the *kolamuth*, speaks: "You see this *Kanda* (the stick with which he beats

[1] That is, he taught the carver how to make it.

[2] One of these two men is Mekeo, father of one of the boys. The other is a member of his clan. They perform their role in the dance because they know it, rather than because of their kinship to the boys.

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DANCING MASK

MALANGGAN

[facing p. 120]

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881 778 the *kolamuth*). When I was a little boy my grandfather gave it to me, and now I use it well. It is not good that you say, 'Who gave it to him?' Now you know; it was my grandfather who gave it to me." He sits down.

[302] Now four men come in, faces smeared with white lime, hair decorated with leaves, and carrying leaves and a shell rattle in their hands.[1] Silently they dance up to the *malanggan*. One hurls a stick, as if it were a spear, at the round enclosure in the centre of the *Kolebmur malanggan*, which represents a door and is called by that name, *mut*. When the stick hits it a plank behind falls down, leaving an opening. The stick is laid in the centre of the enclosure before the *malanggan*. The four men now sit down in front of the *malanggan* and sing. When they stop Lungow picks up a betel-nut from the ground in front of the *malanggan* and says, "This betel-nut belongs to the *Walik malanggan*." Picking up the betel-nut is a signal that the dancing is over and that the feasting will begin. If anyone should rise before this signal it is thought that some disaster would befall him; he might fall from a tree.

[262] Two young men bring in a baked pig and place it on the ground beside the *malanggan*. Two large bundles of baked taro and another pig are already there, and two other pigs are on top of the *malanggan*. All the pigs have been contributed by Sola, Mekeo, Lungow, and Lumaeris, the owners of the *malanggans*. Sola stands up, holding in his hands [293] the bird's beak (*Notinamaen*), the black wooden rattle containing pigs' teeth (*Tumba*), the headdress of feathers (*Bilut*), all used by the two men who had been swaying back of the 881 778 537 *malanggan*. He says: "You see the *kanda* (stick thrown at the *malanggan*), the *notinamaen*, the *bilut*, the *tumba*: Now if I,

[1] These men are of different clans and moieties, but the one who hurls the stick is of the same clan as the man who is displaying the *malanggan*. The former says that his clan relatives taught him how to "shoot the door."

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Sola, should die, then a younger man will talk as I do. Suppose someone should ask who taught him. He will answer that Sola has taught him. I have finished speaking." Each of the eight boys being circumcised walks over in turn to where Sola sits and puts some tobacco and *tsera* at his feet.

Then Lowni, owner of the *Kolebmur malanggan* being displayed, and who has sold it to Orlok, stands up and repeats in regard to his *malanggan* what Sola has just said. The eight boys now put tobacco and *tsera* at Lowni's feet.

Towni, owner of another *Walik malanggan*, being displayed, talks: "Before, when I was a little boy, I worked on a plantation and I did not know this *malanggan*. Then I learned about it from my *Tata* (maternal uncle). Now I have made it and give it to Pungoli, my *tsiringi* (maternal nephew)." The latter is one of the eight boys, and now gives *tsera* and tobacco to Towni.

Then the men contributing the pigs make the payments for them publicly, holding the *tsera* up in full view and announcing to whom and for what are they paying it, and then Sola makes a speech over the two pigs resting on top of the *malanggans*. He says: "All of you look at these two pigs. They have been sleeping on this bed on top of the *malanggans*, and therefore they are taboo. We will eat them here in the enclosure and finish eating them here. These other two pigs on the ground, we will eat half here and the remaining half will be taken out to the women. But these two pigs which have been on top of the *malanggan*, they must not be taken out to the women. I have finished talking." The *malanggans* are taboo to the women, who may not look at them. The pigs, evidently from their proximity to the *malanggans*, have also become taboo to the women.

Towni stands on top of the two taboo pigs and cuts them up. Two men act as waiters and distribute plates of leaves to all those present. The same ten men now advance as a unit, pick up taro, stand in front of the plates with it, and

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when Sola gives a hiss as a signal, place it on the plates. The men return to the big pile of taro, pick up some more, advance in a body to the plates, and wait for the signal which is given this time by Towni. He says, "*Arurini la pulla*" ("put them down"). And this is repeated each time a portion of the food is put on the plates. When the food has been distributed, each plate contains about ten baked taro, fifteen bananas, and a couple of large pieces of pig, about 5 lb. perhaps. This portion is for three men, all of whom sit around one plate. As soon as all the food is distributed, Sola and Takou walk the length of the enclosure and back again, each one holding a small bone (rib of the pig). They are silent, and so too is everyone else. With a rather dramatic gesture they throw the bones away. This is the signal for everyone to begin eating. After they have eaten for a little while, Sola advances, bird's beak in his mouth and rattle in his hand, and dances up and down the centre of the enclosure. All the men cry in chorus, "Walik Ah!" The only explanation is that it is one of the customs peculiar to the *Walik malanggan.*

The pig lying on the ground is now cut up, and Sola talks over it: "This pig has been cut, now distribute it; half will go to the women outside." The pig is then distributed on the plates. Finally the men finish eating, and then they wash their hands in the sea, put the remains of the food in the basket, which they take out to the women. Some of the taboo pig was not eaten, but it remains inside the enclosure.

The initial rites held for the boys coming out of the enclosure, and for the first showing of the *malanggan*, are finished for the present, and will be continued about six weeks later, when the completed painted *malanggans* are displayed. During this interval all the men of Lesu rehearse their dances every evening just before sunset. Those men who are not in the dance watch the others, but no woman

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sees them. The women of Tagam, but not those of Lesu, also practise their dances daily.

The week before the big rites is one of intensive preparation. There are the final dance rehearsals. Bananas are carried on poles to Ponatlege to be buried in the sand there. The *malanggans* are receiving their final coats of paint, and the dancing masks, *anis*, are being finished. This work is being done in the men's house, where it is taboo for women to come. The impending rites are the main subject of conversation, and there is a general air of expectancy.

Two days before the rites the women go to the gardens and bring in the taro which they carry to Ponatlege, where they begin the communal cooking. The *malanggans* are finished and covered with leaves. They are carried from the hamlet of Ponbumbu,[1] where they were made, to the enclosure at Ponatlege. When they have been placed within the little grass house the men eat within the enclosure. Taro, fish, and bananas is their feast.

On the late afternoon of the same day a dress rehearsal of the masked dance, *tselanith anis*, is held. The rehearsals up to now have been held in the compound of the men's house at Ponbumbu. But to-day the women are invited to witness a rehearsal held in the open compound. The men are very proud of their masks, and say quite frankly that they want the women to see them. It is obviously a vaunting display in front of the women. They arrive and, sitting on the ground in the open compound, wait for about an hour before the rehearsal begins. Snatches of singing and occasional blowing of the conch shell are heard from the men's house. The men beat the *kolamuth*, and finally the dancers emerge. After it is over the women go home. That night the men again practise within the enclosure of the men's house, more because they are excited about it than because there is any need for repetition.

[1] The carver lives in this hamlet.

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The next day the cooking preparations proceed in earnest. Over a hundred women gather at Ponatlege and the adjoining hamlet to prepare the taro. The men are busy wrapping the fish in leaves and tending to the *liga*. The only idlers are a few old men, some of whom sit and play with the babies, while others are chatting in the men's house. The food is left on the *liga* overnight, and the next day sees the climax of the *malanggan* rites.

By the middle of the morning all the people of Lesu, Ambwa, and Langania, and many from the more distant villages of Libba and Tandis, and even a few from Fakmalak and Laummasong, both of different language groups, arrive at Ponatlege. Five or six hundred people are present. The men and women sit around in a large open space in the centre of the hamlet left free for dancing. The men sit on the side nearest the enclosure and the men's house, while the women are on the other side; even quite young children observe this distinction. On the side where the women sit a small temporary booth is erected to hold baked taro and bananas. This is for the women who, if they are hungry between dances, go in and eat. The men do not eat any of this food, but wait until the rites are over for the day. Everyone is anxious for the dancing to begin.

In come the first group of dancers, who are from Lesu. Each man wears an elaborate mask, a grass or rather leaf petticoat, and a red shirt. In the past, instead of the red shirt, which he now buys especially for this occasion from the trade store on a near-by plantation, he painted his body red from the waist up so that his identity might remain concealed. As each dancer enters, an old man blows from his hand some powdered lime, *lest*, in front of the performer, to make him dance well. The dancers enter in couples, except the first man who acts as a leader, escorting in each pair of dancers. When all have appeared, they dance together in circle and line formation. The dance is a very strenuous

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one, and the hot masks and tight shirts add to the discomfort of the participants. Only the youngest and strongest men take part, and they are exhausted when it is over.

After a short interval, fourteen men from Langania enter and do a very similar dance. The masks, costumes, and music are identical, but there is a slight variation in the steps and form.

Following them, thirty men from Libba without masks dance. Their dance is one of elaborate figures and intricate abstract formation, with no apparent meaning. No native interpretation of the figures and no conscious symbolism was attached to this dance.

In the interval following these three dances some of the Ponatlege women distribute a few taro and bananas to the other women, who eat them.

In the next dance the men from the village of Tandis have masks very cleverly representing owl heads (*dudul*). The entire body of each dancer is covered with leaves. The dance is in two-line formation, and one line is supposed to represent men and the other their ghosts. It was taught to the Tandis men by a man from the Kockopo district of New Hanover, now working on a plantation at Tandis.

In the next dance sixteen men wearing masks and costumes similar to the ones in the first dance form two lines, one of which sits on the ground and represents a snake who wants to eat the men in the other line, who stand and wave sticks representing spears. In the dance the men fight the "snake" with their spear and kill "it." All these movements form part of the dance, and though not too obvious are performed with sufficient realism to convey the idea.

There is one more dance, an intricate, abstract figure, by the men of Laummasong.

By now it is late afternoon, and the dancing is over for the day; the rites will be continued the next day. The men enter the men's house to eat.

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Early the next morning everyone again assembles at Ponatlege. First comes the distribution of food. The women of Tagam (Ponatlege and neighbouring hamlets) give to the other women baked taro and pigs' entrails.

Then follows an interval when everyone waits for the dancing to be resumed. In come the women from Tagam and a few from Langania (one of the boys who has been circumcised is from Langania). Most of the women have their hair painted red, but a few have it a vivid blue. All have a smudge of the white powdered lime on their cheeks, and each one holds a leaf. They perform the *Bilalo* dance, which is one of the abstract formations. During the dance one man with powdered lime in his hand strikes one of the dancers on the back. A woman also with the powdered lime hits a dancer on the back. Later the dancer will give the person who hits him some tobacco. This action takes place frequently during all the dances, and occurs between two people who stand in the *tamangaina* and *ripunga* relationship.[1] The action just described always occurs whenever there is ritual dancing, and usually provokes laughter from the audience. I was unable to get any explanation of it from the natives, except that it always occurs between the kindred mentioned.

This dance is the first performed by women in these concluding rites. The dancers come from the same hamlets as the boys who were initiated. When the boys went to be circumcised, the women from all the surrounding villages danced and the men formed the audience. When the boys come out from the enclosure, it is the men from all the near-by villages who dance and the

[1] The first is the relation between a man or a woman and their father's sister, and the second is the relationship between a man and his father's sister's son or his mother's brother's son, and between a woman and her mother's brother's daughter or her father's sister's daughter's daughter. When the relationship is between two females, the term is *Rapungaina* (*ina* being a suffix denoting female).

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women who are the observers, with the one exception just described.

Following the women, the men of Fakmalak do a very dramatic dance for which an orchestra of both men and women is provided. The men beat the *kolamuth* and the women sing. (In the other dances, when there was an "orchestra," it was composed only of men.) In the centre of the clearing has been stuck a small young tree which represents the sago tree growing on the bank of a river. One man with a mask enters and dramatically cuts down the tree with a very small model of an axe. At first he finds it difficult, but finally he succeeds and the tree is felled. Then immediately an enormous crocodile (a man inside of a very clever representation) enters on the scene. The reptile tries to kill the man. After much skirmishing the man runs "upstage" and goes through the motions of calling for help. Immediately a line of men come in, armed with small sticks representing spears. They try to kill the "crocodile," but do not succeed. There enters another line of men, similarly armed, and combining their forces they succeed in "killing" the "crocodile." It is lifted up and placed in the centre of the circle as they dance around it. This final action is symbolic of putting it in the *liga* to be baked. Then the men sit down and vividly go through the gestures of eating, since they are now supposed to be eating the crocodile. When they finish this, they rise for the vigorous finale, symbolizing victory. The dance is performed with a real dramatic verve, and holds the intense interest of the audience.

Another dramatic dance, also by the men from Fakmalak, follows. The men wear the leaf shirt and painted masks of the *tselanith anis* dance performed earlier, and the dance is one of two-line formation, one line representing women and the other men. The "men" pursue the "women," who act coyly and at first refuse to yield. But finally the men succeed, and the two lines sit down opposite each other and

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each couple embraces. The audience greets the climax with laughter and hilarious shouts.

After this dance comes the distribution of food. Sixteen pigs are on top of the bamboo structure erected for this purpose, and bundles of uncooked taro hang beneath them. Sola, the most important old man in Tagam, and owner of one of the *malanggans* being displayed, stands on top of the pigs and speaks. He refers again to the fact that Ponatlege is a new place, and that this is the first time a *malanggan* has been made here. He also recalls how in the recent past this site was bush, where children played, and men had intercourse with their mistresses, and then how Mekeo came and cut down the trees and built the first house there. (Mekeo formerly came from the hamlet of Ponembua, where Sola lives.) Sola now calls out the names of all important old men of the clan, now dead, his father, Mekeo's father, etc. He says that the *malanggan* belongs to him and Mekeo, but that all the other men of Tagam have helped with their contributions and labour. He adds that the pigs on which he stands are for the feast and that his speech is finished.

Sixteen men have given the sixteen pigs, and the fathers of the boys who were circumcised are among the contributors. The remainder are all men from Tagam, and, speaking generally, they are all the adult men of any importance in Tagam, regardless of their relationship to the eight boys. But as a matter of fact, most of them are related in some way or other, since Tagam is small and several families have intermarried. The pigs, which have been singed and the entrails removed, are now cut up and distributed. Much excitement prevails, loud calling out of the names of the men to whom the pigs are being distributed and bustling activity. Uncooked taro tied together in bunches and bundles of baked taro, bananas, and small pieces of pig are given to the women. When the distribution is

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over, everyone goes home; the women with their heavily loaded baskets, and the men carrying the large portions of pig.

That night the dancing is continued at Ponatlege. The women of Tagam do the *Burutk* dance inside the enclosure of the men's house, where, under ordinary circumstances, they never go. This custom, which is an exception to the general rule, belongs exclusively to the *Walik malanggan*, now being displayed.

The women have the usual smearing of white lime on their faces, but the birds' feathers stuck in their hair are peculiar to this dance. A woman gets the feathers from her husband, to whom she pays a half *tsera*. A widow or unmarried girl obtains the feathers from her brother or father. The dance is one of rather intricate abstract formation, with no apparent meaning. Those women who take no part in the dance sit within the enclosure of the men's house watching it. The men watch it from the outside, leaning against the fence and peering in. The dance continues rather monotonously for several hours, and then the women leave the enclosure in single file, walk around the outside, and return at another entrance. They now sit down and sing the same refrain which accompanies the dance for several more hours, far into the night, which concludes with promiscuous intercourse. The only rule observed is the one of exogamy between the members of the same moiety. The custom is for a man to enter the house of any woman he desires. The men as usual pay *tsera* for the privilege.[1] For about a week after this the women of Tagam sleep together in one house, Mekeo's, while he and the other men sleep else-

[1] It is difficult to gather the exact extent of the promiscuity, because it is now frowned upon by the white Government and forbidden by the missions. I was told that the promiscuity following the dance just described was not carried on to quite the same degree as it was in the past. However, added my informants, very few of the men returned to their homes that night.

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where, and the promiscuity is thus followed by a week of continence.

The morning following the *Burutk* dance an Ambwa man carries back to his own village a half of pig which was given him. He is followed by the man who gave him the half pig, and by several of the boys who have been circumcised. These boys, decorated with leaves and carrying the wooden rattle, *tarruk*, used in one of the dances and an empty basket, run all the way to Ambwa, a distance of about three miles. When they arrive in the village they stand in front of the houses and shake the rattles. The women see them and call to the men who are on the beach. The latter come and give the boys tobacco, *tsera*, and loin-cloths, which they put in the baskets and carry home with them. The same incident happened when another group of the eight circumcised boys followed a half pig to the village of Langania. These payments according to native explanation are not believed to be made for any specific thing, but are merely part of the rites pertaining to the *Walik* and *Kolebmur malanggans*.

A little over a week after this the women of Tagam go through a similar rite. Singing the song of the *Burutk* dance, they walk to Ambwa. Their hair is painted red and decorated with leaves, and their faces are painted red and white. There are two kinds of facial decoration. For the young girls, to whom this is the first participation in the *Walik malanggan* rites, the decoration is a round red circle on each cheek. The older women who have participated in many *Walik malanggan* rites have similar circles on their cheeks, and in addition a line connecting them over the forehead.

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When they arrive at Ambwa they all sit down and rest for a while, and then the Ambwa women give them bundles of baked taro, baked fish, and coconuts. Carrying the food they return, still singing, and on the way back stop at each hamlet of Lesu where they are given more food. The women

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of Lesu and Ambwa prepared the food earlier in the day, and have it all ready strung on poles waiting for the visitors. This food is not considered as a return gift for that which the Tagam women gave them at the beginning of the rites, but merely as a custom concerning the *Walik malanggan*. Finally the Tagam women return to Ponatlege, and there they arrange the food in two piles. The women sit in two lines with the piles of food between them. (The lines are not according to moiety.) Then the women from Fakmalak and Langania, a few of whom have been present at all the rites, put *tsera* and tobacco on top of the food piles. The currency and tobacco goes to the owners of the *malanggans*, and is considered as payment to them for allowing these women from another village to participate in the rites. All the women now eat some of the food they have collected. This feast marks the end of the period of the women sleeping in one house. After this the women go back to their own homes. The *malanggans* remain in the enclosure. No woman has seen them.

About three months later a small feast is held by the Tagam men when the red paint is removed from the hair of the eight boys. This is done by merely covering the hair with white powdered lime.

The concluding rites take place two months after this feast. The night before the former, Sola and Mekeo, the owners of the *Walik malanggan*, secretly make two round objects called *Pundän*, which translated literally means half water.[1] The rounded coconut shell is covered completely with black paint interspersed with white polka dots. On the top is placed a round flat carved piece of wood just like the centre of the *Walik malanggan*. This circular carving is called *balji*, as it is also in the *malanggan*, and means the hearth fire.

[1] It gets this name probably because the base is made of a half coconut shell from which the natives usually drink water; or it may refer to half of the coconut liquid which the natives drink as water.

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A few boys and men (six of them) are allowed to come in during the night and watch them, for which privilege they pay *tsera* and tobacco to Sola and Mekeo. The observers must eat some of the fat from the pigs which have been killed for the feast to be held in the morning. This is a ritual duty, and the fat is not eaten because they like it. Sometimes a man who cannot stomach the fat will merely lick it with his tongue. No native explanation for this custom exists, but it is believed that some misfortune would befall the man who had neglected to eat the fat: he might cut himself while felling a tree, or fall from a tree and die. No one else sees these *Pundän*, and after the rites they are destroyed, even before the *malanggans*.

The next morning about a hundred men gather in the enclosure at Ponatlege. The two *Pundän* are out of sight in the separate little enclosure behind the *malanggan* house, in front of which the food is piled—two pigs, baked taro, bananas, and a species of chestnut (*koh*). Sola stands up and talks: "These two pigs belong to the concluding rites for the *malanggan*. We have made big rites for them. All the men and all the women ate pigs. Now to-day we, the men, but not the women, will eat pigs. Why have not all the men from Langania come? All the men from Lesu and Ambwa are here. The Langania men did not come because they are lazy." Sola now gives *tsera* to one man in payment for the pig. He has contributed the other one himself. The food is distributed according to traditional custom. After this Sola comes out adorned with a feather headdress, a bright red loin-cloth, a pig's liver hanging out of his mouth, the shark fishing rattle in one hand, and a smaller shell rattle in the other. *Kerapo* leaves are stuck in his armband. Thus arrayed, he dances up and down the centre of the enclosure and sings, or rather hums a wordless song. This performance is called *baeas*.

When the men have eaten there are speech- by the old

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men about the present deluge of rain, and how the rain magician will stop it. Gradually the men drift out of the enclosure. Later, the *malanggans* having served their purpose will be quietly destroyed.

SUMMARY

The *malanggan* and initiation rites are over. Sometimes it has been difficult to separate the two and know exactly when the rites were for the *malanggans* and when for the initiation of the boys. We have described them both, interwoven as they are, in detail because of the importance of initiation rites in primitive societies all over the world, and because we have so little information about the *malanggans* that details concerning their rites may be of some use in any further study of them. Their exact significance is still not quite clear. We know that they are to honour the dead, that they are taboo to women, that they are surrounded with very elaborate dances and other ritual, that wealth is necessary to make the feasts accompanying them, and that much prestige comes to him who holds the *malanggan* rites. We know, too, that they have come from the far past. In the ritual speeches, and in the more informal discussions about the carvings, there is scarcely any mention of the dead, in whose honour they might be made. Mention is made of the former ownership of them, how the present owner learned the rites (thus in a way vouching for his right to make it), and of how his clan relatives helped him. Each step in the making of the *malanggans*, from the building of the small structure to house them to the destruction of the two secret objects, *pundän*, which conclude the rites, has been elaborately solemnized with dances and feasts. No initiation of the boys could be held without these accompanying *malanggan* rites. Whether in some far-distant past they were more intimately associated

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with the dead than they appear to be now is a matter for speculation.[1]

Because the initiation and *malanggan* rites have covered such a long period of time and have been so varied and described in such detail, it is desirable to summarize the events, to point out the most significant aspects, and to suggest an interpretation. The following is the chronological sequence of events:

1. Planting of gardens and making of taro magic ten months before the big feasts.

2. Making of *malanggans* and masks begun several months before the rites take place.

3. *May 8th.*—Building of enclosure in which boys will be circumcised and secluded.

4. *June 3rd.*—Dancing all night by the women, followed the next morning by the circumcision of the boys, who after that remain within the enclosure.

5. *June 7th.*—Small house built within the enclosure to hold the *malanggans* which will be placed there later.

6. *June 25th.*—Boys come out from the enclosure. Dancing by men and placing of unpainted *malanggans* in the enclosure.

7. *June 26th–July 30th.*—Men of whole village and women of Tagam having daily dance rehearsals.

8. *July 30th–August 6th.*—Week of intensive preparations for final rites.

9. *August 6th and 7th.*—Completed *malanggans* placed in the enclosure and displayed to the men. Feast and elaborate dancing end with sexual promiscuity.[2]

10. *August 9th–August 17th.*—Women of Tagam sleep in one house and men in their own homes. Continence observed.

11. *August 27th.*—Tagam women walk singing to the next village, collecting food in each hamlet on the way. After this they go back to normal sleeping arrangements.

[1] *Malanggans* in their context of mortuary rites and a further description of them is given, pp. 315–319 (Chapter VIII). The sale of a *malanggan* is described, pp. 210–224 (Chapter VI).

[2] If it were not that the boys had to come out of the enclosure early to go to the mission school, the rites held on June 25th and those on August 6th and 7th would have been held at one time on the last date.

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12. *November* 18*th*.—Feast by the men in enclosure on the occasion of the removal of red paint from the hair of the eight boys.

13. *January* 25*th*.—Final rites and feast for the *malanggans*, after which they are destroyed.[1]

INTERPRETATION

Several points in the initiation rites should be considered. First, there are the different roles played by the women *versus* the men, and by the clan relatives *versus* the parents, and the role of the whole community. Prior to the circumcision, the women of the village and the neighbouring villages rehearsed their dances every night and played the dominant ritual roles. We saw them fight the men who were taking their boys away from them, and we were told that all the women were dancing in sympathy with the mothers who were losing the boys. The symbolism of these women's rites is apparently very conscious. The men, except in their fight with the women, took no part in the rites preceding the circumcision. When the boys come out from their seclusion the roles are reversed. Now the men of all the neighbouring villages come and perform their dances on this occasion. These two days of excitement and dancing have their climax on the second night in a dance by the women (mothers and other relatives) of the hamlet from which the boys come, which ends in sexual promiscuity. It would seem that the dancing of the last two days would naturally lead to a heightening of the emotions, which in turn leads to the promiscuity.[2] This might also symbolize the reuniting of

[1] All of the above rites were witnessed, except the making of taro magic (made before my arrival), which was later observed in another connection.

[2] The admonitions during rehearsals to dance well because the members of the opposite sex will later be their audience and the vaunting display by the men before the women at a "dress" rehearsal should all be remembered in this connection.

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the two sexes after their separation in the preliminary rites. The unusualness of the women dancing within the enclosure of the men's house, which ordinarily they do not enter, adds to the unconventionality of the occasion. Perhaps it is by stepping outside the rules of the society that the occasion is made more significant. The period of continence following the promiscuity also contributes to the significance of the event.

The women have been a unit apart from the men, opposing the circumcision of the boys and expressing their sorrow in the dance. The men have taken the boys from their mothers, and at the end of the period of seclusion have welcomed them by the dance and by the *malanggan* rites into the masculine society. The *malanggans*, it must be remembered, are the most important ritual objects of the society and taboo to the women. It is therefore quite fitting that they be displayed on this occasion.

It has been noted that the parents and clan relatives play different roles, and how the relationship of the boys to their clan relatives is stressed at this time. It is the clan relatives who get the betel-nut and *tsera* from the members of the opposite moiety. It is particularly the maternal uncle who has featured in the rites. It is he who contributes much of the wealth necessary to hold the rites. His relationship is stressed again when his wife, and not the mother of the boy, has the opportunity of making a speech of either praise or blame about her husband.

And yet while the father does not have such an important ritual role, he is not unimportant, for it is the father and the maternal uncle who walk affectionately and encouragingly with the boy just before he enters the enclosure, and it is also the father who holds the boy during the painful operation. The relationship to the father is also emphasized when the boys come out of the enclosure and

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give tobacco and pig's fat to the father's sister.[1] The sentiments binding fathers to their boys are given full expression, even though the clan relatives may have a dominant ritual role. The mothers who are of the same clan as their sons have their role too. It is they (and not the wife of the maternal uncle) who weep and fight the men when the boys are taken into the enclosure. It is they also who have been especially zealous with contributions from their gardens and in preparing the food. While the initiation rites are of particular concern to the parents and clan relatives of the boys, the whole community is also interested and anticipates the event months in advance. The presence and participation of all the members of the community adds impressiveness to the occasion, and brings the rites to an effective and dramatic climax.

The combination of the *malanggan* rites with the initiation rites is of interest. While everyone knows that the former are for the dead, and while the figures on the carvings represent dead ancestors, the points stressed in speeches have nothing to do with the dead persons. Those making the *malanggans* tell how the right to make them has come down through their clan, how they have collected much wealth before they could be made, and how they are now making them because the boys are being initiated. The dead remain in their graves quite undisturbed. The making of *malanggans* at this time adds additional significance to the initiation rites.

The boy has been initiated and is now a full member of masculine society. He sleeps in the men's house, and while he continues to eat at home and still participates in the family life, a break has been made between him and his

[1] This might also be interpreted in another way, for these women are of the moiety of the boys' future mates, and the presentation of tobacco and pig's fat may symbolize their future relations with women of the opposite moiety.

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mother and all the women of the group. The circumcision itself is not the fundamental or essential part of the rite. In the past it was the adult men who were circumcised, and at this time *malanggans* were also displayed. In this same past the boys of the age who are now being circumcised had their ear lobes cut, a ceremony accompanied by the same period of seclusion, and the same fighting between the women and the men, the same display of *malanggans* when the boys came out of their seclusion, etc. The rites seem to centre around the initiation of the boys to masculine society and not around the actual circumcision, which is but an excuse. Before, the cutting of the ear lobes served as the *raison d'être*.

The girls too had their ear lobes cut, but there was no ceremony or ritual connected with it, but instead was done privately in her own house, usually when it was raining. There was some theory that the operation would not hurt so much if performed while it was raining. The piercing was done with a sharpened stone, and then a coconut leaf, rolled around a small twig, was put in the hole to make the loop drop. There is a folk-tale told to children who were afraid to have it cut, of how a man with uncut ear lobes died and how the others defecated in his ear. Most of the adults have the drooping ear lobe, and all the old people have it. But to-day this operation is very infrequently performed on children, and it will probably soon disappear.

That the ceremony in the past accompanied the operation on the ears for the boys but was lacking for the girls indicates again that the rites are essentially to mark the boy's break from home and female society and his entrance into adult male society.

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CHAPTER V

MARRIAGE

562 858 THE first ritual event for the girl after she has passed her infancy is at the beginning of puberty. During the first two or three years of her life she is the pet of the community and the *raison d'être* for many rites and feasts. But during her childhood she is no longer the centre of attention, and instead lives on the edge of the adult world, listening to its conversations, imitating the dances, watching her mother scrape the taro, and later doing her share in the cooking. When her brothers and the other young boys of the village are circumcised there are elaborate rites, but they do not directly concern her. It is true, she participates in the general excitement of the occasion, witnesses the ceremonies, even helps in the preparations of food, and joins in the dances of the adult women. But she is in no way an integral part of the rites. They concern the boys. At the age of five or six, or earlier, she is betrothed, but here too, while intimately concerned, it is her mother, her mother's brother, and maternal relatives of the future husband who are the actors. She is in the background.

RITES AT FIRST MENSES

881 885 She comes to the foreground when her first menses occur. This is not just a personal matter, of concern to herself or to her immediate family, but it is a ritual and communal event. It is anticipated with eagerness, and the rites are prepared for and participated in by the whole community. Its ritual and social significance is due to the fact that the girl is now considered an adult, and that the marriage rites follow immediately. It marks her entrance into adult female

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society, as the initiation rites mark the entrance of boys into adult male society.

While the people of Lesu have no record of ages and no unit of the year, there is some knowledge from observation of the development of the body (particularly the size of the breasts) as to when the first menses may be expected. Everyone knows that some time within the next eight or ten moons a young girl will reach puberty. When I asked who of the village would probably reach puberty during my visit, I was told that most likely it would be Tsuros. And that is as it happened. Tsuros has her first menses, and the news spreads eagerly through the village. It is talked about as a great event. Immediately bananas are brought by the women of both moieties and buried in the sand by the men, in preparation for the feast which will soon be held.

There is no seclusion for the girl during this period of her first menses, at the end of which is her ritual washing. Just before sunrise she is washed in the sea by an old woman, who holds in her hand a branch of the tree *tsil*. The girl and the old woman stand in the rather shallow water just off the reef as the old woman dips the leaves in the sea and then waves them over the girl, touching the various parts of her body with the wet leaves. As she does so she says the following spell:

> Leaf, leaf, I wash her,
> Soon her breasts will develop,
> I take away sickness of blood.

Then the leaves are mixed with white lime and rubbed all over the body of the girl by the same old woman, and after that she paints the girl's hair red. The old woman is not chosen for her relationship to the girl, or because she is of any particular moiety or clan, but merely because of her knowledge of the spell. Should the ritual washing of the girl not occur, it is thought that her breasts will not develop, and she would therefore lack the symbol of womanhood.

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A feast is held on the day of the ritual washing. The village women of both moieties come, bringing their taro, to the hamlet where the girl lives, and there they prepare it to be baked in the *liga*. The girl herself is present, but does not help in the preparations. Then the women of the *Telenga* moiety give the food that they have brought and prepared to the women of the *Kongkong* moiety, and *vice versa*. The girl is given a bundle of taro specially prepared for her by her father's sister. If the girl is of the *Telenga* moiety, the *Telenga* women advance singing, carrying bundles of taro given to them by the *Kongkong* women, to the place where the girl is sitting and pile the food up in front of her. They sing:

Nama maagulip igitupmi
maresik weh weh
ngat amni tso ogaluna.[1]

The *Telenga* women then remain sitting by the girl near the pile of food contributed by the *Kongkong* women, who sit a short distance away by their pile of food given by the *Telenga* women. Each group eats a little, and then loads the remainder in their baskets to carry home, where the whole family get their share.

This is one of the few ritual occasions which is dominated by the women. But the relationship of the girl to her father seems to be stressed at this time, as the women in discussing this matter with me always emphasized the fact that the women giving the food to the girl and the members of her moiety are of the same moiety as her father. Although the girl is betrothed and her wedding rites follow shortly, there is no mention that it is her future husband's moiety who is giving her taro.

Before describing the wedding rites which come some time during the next month, the subject of menstruation in

[1] This I am unable to translate. Most of the songs of this people are in some obsolete and forgotten language, and they themselves do not know the meaning of the words.

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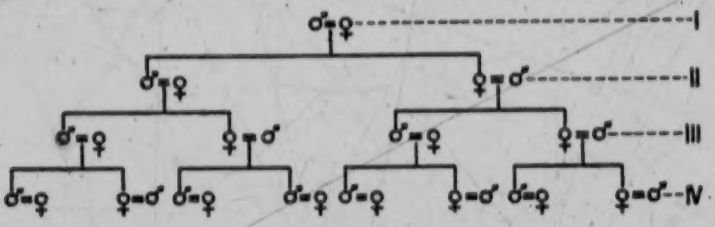
stone-age people, where the unit of a year is unknown, and where there is no record of ages, written or otherwise, this is a way of getting around the question of age. One can, through the use of genealogies, classify everyone according to generation. Thus, given a number of genealogies, such as



all those on the line with *I* are in one generation, those on the line with *II* in another, and those on the line with *III* in still another, and so on.

The generations have been indicated as follows: Those persons in generation *I* are a past generation in which the women are dead. The generation described as *II* are the children of *I*, and the women are old, past the childbearing period. Number *III* are the children of *II* and are women who have reached their menopause. The group known as number *IV* are young women whose marriage is of more than one year's duration and who are in the childbearing period, frequently in the beginning of it. This group can be used only in a limited manner. The sex, name, clan, order of birth (first, second, or third born, etc.), approximate time of death and various other ethnological facts were recorded for each person in the genealogies.

Because of the lack of a calendar and complete ignorance of their chronological age, intervals of time have to be calculated from the physiological crises occurring in the life history of an individual. The lactation period lasts from two to three years. The period of childhood indicates the time between the end of the lactation period and the beginning of puberty, approximately between the ages of two and a half or three and thirteen.[8] Youth covers the period from the end of childhood

[8] The average age for the beginning of menstruation in the tropics is said to be 12.9 years. See Carr-Saunders, A. M.—*The Population Problem*, 1922, Oxford, p. 91.

For the boy there is no such clearly marked physiological end of childhood. Circumcision occurs, roughly, any time between the ages of about eight and twelve, or thirteen. It is a communal rite, held when the necessary food and wealth have been accumulated, and all the boys of the village within these age boundaries are circumcised at one time.